

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

Our news

One amazing act of kindness

October 2019



A Christian charity sending tools across the world

Welcome to TWAM News



In this edition we will focus on the reality that 'one amazing act of kindness' can permanently transform a life. Many of the recipients of our tools recognise that they do not need support for many years - they need training

and then the 'one off' amazing gift of a tool kit. Across the developing world there is a growing recognition that western charities cannot be relied upon to keep providing aid, and that the ultra poor must take responsibility for their own futures. This is easier said than done, but the lasting gift of a tool kit can make this dream a reality. I hope, as you read this TWAM News, you will see the life transforming power of 'one amazing act of kindness.'

Mike Griffin, Chief Executive

Tools to donate?

To find your nearest collection centre or to contact a local collector check our website or contact Ipswich.

Time to donate?

We always need local collectors and volunteers in our refurbishment centres. Please contact Ipswich for details. We'd love to hear from you.

Financial support

TWAM operates seven refurbishment centres across the UK and sends out over 20 containers of tools a year. We keep our costs very low but we still need a lot of support. We value all gifts whether one off or regular. Gifts can be sent to Ipswich and Direct Debit and Gift Aid forms requested.

Prayer support

TWAM depends on prayer. Please pray for us.

"Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Luke 5:26

About us:

Tools with a Mission is a Christian charity enabling people to earn a living and support themselves and their families. In many countries people have few skills, little education and no means of earning a living. A switch from aid dependency to self-sufficiency is impossible without help. TWAM started over thirty years ago, and has since provided this help by collecting and refurbishing tools and equipment no longer required in the UK and sending them overseas. Through collectors and centres across the UK, our team of dedicated volunteers and supporters help transform thousands of lives every year.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Tools with a Mission

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One amazing act of kindness



In one of the most rural areas in Uganda, far from electricity and tarmac roads you will find the village of Bugulusi. It's just a few small homes scattered amongst the trees. But impressions can be false, as this is not a sleepy run-down village with little to impress or inspire. For the villagers are doing something quite amazing. We'll let Jackson, one of the villagers, explain:

"We recognised it is hard for one person to achieve anything, and to change our village we must work together. So we formed a group and set about looking to see how best we could earn income. We decided we should learn carpentry because every

home needs furniture. We started with 12 men who wanted to open a carpentry workshop. We needed help, but we did not want money, for money goes so quickly and then you must ask for more, so we asked for tools."

Jackson and all the men realised that relying on charities to give their village money was not the long-term answer. Relying on financial gifts would not help the village to develop and grow stronger.

So instead they asked for 'one amazing act of kindness.'

They asked for carpentry tools to equip their workshop.

TWAM provided a carpentry workshop kit and they managed to borrow a generator. But, importantly, they saw their future, not in years of financial support, but in one amazing gift of tools.

Increasingly we are finding that communities are seeing for their future to be truly sustainable over the long-term it must be in their own hands and achieved through the whole community pulling together.

This is certainly what Buyala, one of the founders of the group believes. He tells us why:

“When we are together we can support one another. By joining the group I am learning a skill that will enable me to support my family. For the first time I will be able to send my children to school. I do not have my own tools because we share everything. This is good and helps make us strong.”

Jackson joined after Buyala and he tells us:

“My friend Buyala told me about the group. I was convinced and joined. In our community we have a lot of people who cannot send children to school and there is little opportunity for good work. When I complete the course I want to help train others and expand our workshop. I have always wanted to learn carpentry.”

Sitting together they both said:

“We want to be exemplary in our district and want to learn new things.”

TWAM believes ‘one amazing act of kindness’ is the best way to encourage strong, prosperous communities. We believe it is far better for the community to transform their lives and take control of their own prosperity. This not only benefits the community financially, but builds strong and meaningful friendships.

Thank you for helping us to continue to do ‘amazing acts of kindness.’ We could not do it without your continued faithful support.



One amazing woman and one amazing gift

If there is one country in Africa that needs 'amazing acts of kindness', it is the DR Congo. The people have so much to contend with, as the vicious civil war seems unstoppable, corruption plagues attempts to improve their lives, and ebola is an ever-present threat. These are the problems faced by all the main towns we support: Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Goma.

But, the great encouragement is that within this despair and darkness, there are still people determined to do 'one amazing act of kindness'.

One such person is Elizabeth Kabwe from Lubumbashi. Lubumbashi has a population of 1.8 million people, many of whom have fled violence in the rural areas. It is also the centre of the copper-mining industry, and therefore relatively prosperous. So there is potential to thrive, but only if you have a skill to offer. Tragically this means the poorest and least skilled fleeing violence in the countryside have little hope of benefiting. That is until Elizabeth offers them 'one amazing act of kindness'.

Elizabeth is the leader of "Migames Women in Action", a group set up to reach women fleeing terrible violence, abuse and rape, often at the hands of the militias that roam the country. Elizabeth shares her heart with us:



"The girl-mothers just want to feed their children, but have no money and no means to do this because the boys and men who made them pregnant have abandoned them. Many have been left orphans and have nobody to turn to for help. They have no means to look after themselves, pay rent or educate and feed their children."

The story you hear from so many of the girls is the massacre of their families by militia and the wholesale rape of girls and young women. The trauma leaves them unable to cope and in a spiral of destruction, that all too often leads them and their children on to the streets and yet more cruelty and abuse. Somehow they end up being drawn to Lubumbashi and if Elizabeth has anything to do with it - a very different future. She tells us:

“I am most concerned about unwed mothers, widows and orphans and these are the women I invite to learn tailoring. Tailoring is the main choice of the majority of women in our province because it provides a way to become empowered and take control of their lives. This they can do with just the gift of a sewing machine.”



The one amazing gift of a sewing machine

“Migames” have just completed a new tailoring centre where the women and girls can come each week to learn. The course lasts 6 months and is followed by 3 months placement with an established tailor. They learn all aspects of tailoring and business entrepreneurship. Importantly they also receive emotional and spiritual support to gently work through the trauma they have suffered. Elizabeth and her team of volunteers recognise that training alone is not enough - love and prayer for inner healing is also essential.

Elizabeth tells us:

“My joy is to see women take charge of their lives, thanks to our training and distribution of TWAM sewing machines. My next plan is to start training with knitting machines and also to open a computer classroom. I am applying to TWAM for 12 knitting machines and 20 computers. Few people have these skills, so they can generate a lot of revenue.”

But Elizabeth recognises that all her hard work and training of the girls will come to nothing without ‘one amazing act of kindness’: the gift of a sewing machine. The girls cannot use their skills to pay the rent, or feed and educate their children without the sewing machine to make clothes and generate income. It is this gift that transforms the lives of the girls. Elizabeth acknowledges this when she says to all of us:

“I extend my eternal thanks to everyone at TWAM which has helped provide us with sewing machines and the tools we need to help the girl-mothers, widows and orphans. We could not do this without you. When I think of you all, I think of the Bible verse in Hebrews 6:10 which says to us: ‘God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.’

Without your support we could not offer Elizabeth the sewing and knitting machines, and computers she needs. It is only through the tools you donate and the financial support you give that we can continue to send containers all the way to DRC. The next is due to leave in December. Thank you from all of us here at TWAM in the UK.



“If I do not show love, who am I?”

Collins is an amazing man. He is quiet and unassuming and you would not even notice him if you passed him in the street. But he has a huge heart and a determination to make a difference to the lives of aspiring carpenters. He set up the Bidocha Furniture workshop in Zambia to reach out to unemployed young men. He is a skilled carpenter and chooses to use the money he makes from selling furniture to fund his training centre. But why does Collins do this?

Collins tells us:

“My trade is carpentry and all the profits from my workshop support the training of students and provides food for local widows. I am now funding the setting up of an orphanage. I try to identify students who behave

well, and who are intelligent and want to learn. The training course is 2-3 years. I started the workshop because I have to show love to my people. God has shown love to me and I must show love to others. Because God is blessing me, I have to bless others.”

Collins is a typical example of someone who was willing to give up so much, if only somebody else was willing to believe in him and provide him with the tools he needed. That was TWAM and we supplied all the tools to set up his workshop, including a computer, and we continue to provide carpentry kits for graduating students. Let's meet two of the students who are currently about halfway through their courses.





Meet Ben

He tells us:

“I am married with one child. Finding work is very hard, so I knew I needed a skill. I like designing all sorts of furniture, so when someone told me about Collins, I went to see if he would train me. I told him, my problem was I could not afford to pay, but he told me the training was free. I work here six days a week from 07.00-18.00. When I finish, my plans are to have my own workshop in Kafue, but I will go anywhere where I can find customers. Collins is helping me change my life.”

Ben is typical of the people TWAM most wants to help. He has ability, skill, the right attitude and determination to change his life and a willingness to work very, very hard. He just lacks the opportunity. Our ‘one amazing act of kindness’ was to allow Collins to offer him that opportunity.



Secondly let's meet Simakanda. He tells us:

"I am studying at university to become a teacher. The challenge for me is that both my parents do not work and cannot pay my college fees. They cannot even afford to support me, so I have to live with my sister. I knew I would have to try and find something to pay my fees and because I knew Collins and told him of my financial problems he said I could come and work for him. It is very difficult for me as I have a large debt to pay."

"I also want to learn carpentry so I can use my free time to teach people who have no skills. Many youths do not complete their schooling and if I can teach them carpentry this will give them a chance. The reason I want to teach carpentry is that people should

not rely on one thing. If education does not provide a job, if you know carpentry you can still work. Even for me, if the government fails to employ me as a teacher - I can still work."

Simakanda will undoubtedly follow in Collins footsteps and in the years to come feature in TWAM News with his own workshop and with stories to tell of trainees he has helped. This really is the gift that just keeps on giving.

Collins reminds us that 'one amazing act of kindness' often leads to another, like a ripple effect on a pond. This is one of the most powerful legacies of TWAM. The truth that one person helped, goes on to help others. The challenge for TWAM is that this means the demand for our tools gets bigger and bigger every year and only with your support can we ever hope to keep up with the demands for those 'amazing acts of kindness.'

We will change our own community!



‘Skills Link Uganda’

is based on the outskirts of Kampala. It has partnered with TWAM since 2011 when it was started by local people who realised the only way out of poverty and life-long unemployment was to take matters into their own hands. They realised nobody was going to do this for them, and just complaining about their lives would not help anyone. They decided if they wanted to see change, they would have to bring it about themselves. So they formed a committee of local church leaders, school teachers and other interested people who could identify the greatest needs and how to meet them.

They thought long and hard about the best skills they could offer and decided on Carpentry; Hairdressing and Salon Management; Tailoring and Fashion Design; Managing Computers and Office Applications; and Catering. All courses include micro-business entrepreneurship training and life planning skills (this includes personal hygiene, exercising and nutrition).

They identified four needs:

1. They had to break the cycle of life-long unemployment.
2. They had to offer training that people could afford.
3. They had to focus on school drop-outs and the disabled, as they were the people who struggled most to find work.
4. They had to respond to criticism of employers that people in the community, even college graduates, lacked the skills they needed for their businesses.



Godfrey Lukwago from **Skills Link** tells us:

“We have tried to meet the needs of local businesses as well as the people who want to start their own business. The beauty of our courses is that one needs very little capital to start-up; for example a simple carpentry shop or a small tailoring workshop is easy to set up in your own home.”

But all of this would have remained a dream without ‘one amazing act of kindness’. The tools to make it possible. They turned to TWAM who provided all the equipment to set up the centre and still provide carpentry kits, sewing machines and computers to trainees.



Meet Emily

She tells us

“I am 21 and a trainee doing fashion design. I dropped out of school and thereafter my life became so hard for me. When an opportunity came I joined Skills Link Uganda in January 2019. I can now make a number of fashions ranging from baby dresses to children’s clothes. I want to thank you that now I can see a brighter future.”

When Emily tells us that ‘life became so hard’ it normally means the hopelessness of looking at your young life and realising that there is no future to look forward to, just years of unemployment, hardship and struggle. Never underestimate the beautiful gift of ‘now I can see a brighter future.’ That truly is the result of ‘one amazing act of kindness.’

Meet Proscovia



“I am 23 and I am learning tailoring. Life was very hard for me, as I did not finish my education and had no skills. I did not know what I could do, but now I am capable of making different fashions, especially for young girls and women. I can now sell things to raise money and buy more material. I am aiming at starting a personal boutique in the future if all goes well.”

What an amazing turn around for Proscovia! To go from seeing no future or way forward to planning to open a boutique. This is her ‘one amazing act of kindness’ with the gift of training and self belief, backed up by the sewing machine that will make it all possible.

With your support we will continue to send Skills Link tools and equipment. Currently they have applied for more sewing machines, carpentry kits and power tools, electrician’s kits and knitting machines. Each one of which will prove to be ‘one amazing act of kindness’ to the trainees who receive them.

Finally Godfrey tells us:

“I want to thank TWAM because the training centre is greatly seen as a solution to the increasing job scarcity brought about by lack of practical skills and knowledge. Many youths and women had lost hope of ever working, but are now very productive. This has been possible because of financial and material support, committed tutors, and above all God’s mercy.”

'One amazing act of kindness':

Kawempe Youth Development, on the outskirts of Kampala, has worked with TWAM for many years to reach out to homeless children. The leader of the project, Bernard, explains why their work is so important. He tells us:

“Children can become homeless for many reasons, mainly loss of parents, drunk and abusive fathers and loss of income meaning children cannot be afforded. Then they are forced to leave the home. They are desperate and do not know what to do or how to survive and street gangs take advantage of this to force them into crime. Our project tries to rescue the children before they go into crime. The gangs attract children with money, alcohol and drugs.”

Bernard and the Kawempe project recognise that if children are to be rescued from street gangs and crime, they need to be offered an alternative that gives them hope of a better life. Equally importantly they recognise they are the ones that must go the extra mile to reach out to these traumatised children. Bernard tells us how they do this:

“We have volunteers called Community Mobilisers who will go out and look for children; they know which areas in the slums where children congregate; they also hire vehicles with loud speakers to advertise their offer of help. Boys are easier to find than girls, as they are often quickly picked up by gangs and forced into prostitution.

When street children are found and are willing to come to Kawempe they are invited to live at the Centre while they sort out their lives. They are offered trauma counselling, self worth and confidence-building lessons, with some discussion to agree their life plan. Depending on



Rescuing the street children



their age this may include getting them back to school or starting vocational training. They must want to do this and the counselling helps them to see their potential. Depending on why they left home, family reconciliation is also encouraged.

It is at this stage that TWAM support becomes so important, as it is with TWAM computers and school books that schooling is completed, and TWAM sewing machines, carpentry kits and mechanics kits equip the workshops. But it's not all work as Bernard tells us:

“We also have a football team; a garden where children can learn to grow vegetables; a kitchen where they learn to cook and improve their nutrition; and a music workshop.”

They take children 8-17 years old but if a younger child is found they will not be turned away. Tony is one such child. He was just 6 when he was found by the volunteers and brought to the centre. At the other end of the age range is William. He is 17 and about to finish catch-up schooling to go on to the mechanics course.

Without the support of TWAM the Kawempe project could not offer the skills training and tools that provide the vital and realistic alternative to crime. With your support they are making a huge impact into the age-old tragedy of children forced onto the streets. This truly is ‘one amazing act of kindness’. Thank you for making it possible.

I want to do 'one amazing act of kindness'

With your support we can provide the tools that offer someone struggling with poverty, homelessness and despair the 'one amazing act of kindness' they so desperately need to lift themselves out of poverty.

Your gift can transform a life forever.

Please accept my gift of:

☐ £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100

☐ £150 ☐ £250 ☐ Other £ _____

(Cheques payable to Tools with a Mission)



Name: _____

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☐ I would like to Gift Aid my donation, please send me a Gift Aid form.

Or you could donate online or provide the gift of a tool kit at twam.uk.

We'd love to stay in touch

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From time to time we would like to send you our magazine and other mailings and/or our regular e-newsletter by email. If you consent to us contacting you for this purpose please tick to say how you would like us to contact you:

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